CONSECRATION.

MRS. H. W. BROWN.

"Now ye have consecrated yourselves unto the Lord, come near and bring sacrifice and thanks-offerings unto the house of the Lord."—2. Chron. 29 : 31.

Are you willing, wholly willing,
Just the little things to do,
Caring more to please the Master,
Than for what men say of you?
Do you feel no obligation
To acknowledge Christ in you?
Have you never asked in earnest,
"Lord, what wilt Thou have me do?"

You have asked, and He has shown you—
But your shrinking heart cried, "No!
It is true, I asked for service,
But—this way I cannot go!"
While you choose, you are not willing;
Consecration yieldeth all!
Consecration means obedience
To the Spirit's every call;

Meaneth dying, meaneth living,—
Death of self—and life in God;
Meaneth work, or patient waiting,
Or submission 'neath the rod!
Meaneth such a full surrender
We shall never dare to ask,
Why God gives our faith such testing,
Or assigns so hard a task,

We are here to be perfected:
Only Christ our need can see;
Rarest gems bear hardest grinding
God's own workmanship are we.
He loves harmony not discord;
And whatever may befall,
Life's grand Psalm He is perfecting,—
Let us praise him for it all.

CHRISTIAN PROGRESSION.

Sermon preached at Everest, Kans., Sunday, Nov. 2, 1884.

BY W. J. H. BAUMAN.

TEXT; 2 Peter, 1 : from 3rd to 9th verses, inclusive.

I am glad for this third verse. It teaches us that the highest and most perfect authority possible has given us a perfect criterion in things pertaining to Christian life and character—"that the man of God might be thoroughly furnished." These "all things" embrace everything essential to man's salvation from sin, present and future. Through these "all things" which are given to us, not by human, but by "divine power", we are made heirs of the promises of God, which promises signify "the life that now is and that which is to come." This fact should be practically appreciated on our part. We should not depend on faith alone, for faith without works is dead"; therefore, the apostle enjoins upon us to "add to our faith, virtue." Virtue means moral excellency and moral courage. In a truly Christian sense it means more. It developes and demonstrates in man all that is truly great, good and noble. The unbeliever may possess moral excellency and courage to a large degree with some men. With some men moral qualities of character are born, but no man is born (according to nature) a Christian. He is born with grand possibilities and the ingredients of his make-up can only be truly and fully developed by Christian virtue. He "must be born again"—must be re-developed.

Among all the heroes whom we admire and almost worship, none are so grandly heroic as the true Christian. With the Christian everything is principle. For his principles he will dare to die. With his Master in front, he is willing, if need be, to be "led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep dumb before the shearer," without opening his mouth. His only question bears on Christian duty and it he will unflinchingly perform, let the consequences be what they will. In the excellency of his new born nature, he will dare—will have the courage to soar sufficiently high in the grandeur of Christian humility—to love, not only those who love him, but even his enemies. The man who dares to be smitten without retaliation, and who seeks not revenge, but only the good of men, manifests the grandest heroism possible. Such self-overcoming is to achieve a victory greater than that achieved by any human conqueror.

Christian virtue seeks—"in self-forgetting love"—to do good and, regrardless of suffering, seeks to exemplify the holy sentiments expressed by the heavenly choir at the time of our Savior's birth, "Glory to God in the highest; on earth peace and good will towards men." The weapons of the Christ-like virtuous are not carnal. The Christian has nothing to do with carnal weapons. No brute force for him; his mission is to destroy sin by developing the good in man by lofty urgings to step high on the ladder of human possibility through "divine power." To everything unchristian he must have the courage to say, no; let come what will. He must trust in God for the final result.

To virtue we are to "add knowledge." Knowledge means a "clear and correct perception of faith." Some people seem terribly afraid of knowledge; still we are living in a knowledge seeking age, of which I am glad. We have opportunities afforded us to acquaint ourselves with evil and its effects. I am glad even for that. I do not believe that the devil possesses much foreknowledge. If he did it seems to me he would be a little more cautious and secluded in his demonstrations of wickedness.

In the development of our better nature, how we abhor wickedness; the very sight of it causes us to loathe it. But our chief study should be about things that are good. We should make the effort to learn about God all that is possible. The men best acquainted with God serve him the most acceptably. Our God bears acquaintance.

As a rule, the followers of Ingersoll, and others of the more prominent infidels, are the more ignorant. The low and vulgar are all in the ranks of infidelity in some form. The ordinary infidel seldom reads the Bible and, as to natural science—which is but the handwriting of God—he knows but little and what he does know he usually misapplies. The candid unprejudiced mind sees the handwriting of God everywhere in nature, and Christians need not fear scientific knowledge and research. Joshua was about as scientific when he commanded the sun to stand still as our Almanac-makers are when they tell us that the sun rises and sets. With them it is, and with Joshus it was, simply a mode of expression. Joshua wanted the light to continue shining until a certain end be attained. Paul realized great excellency in his knowledge of Jesus Christ. It made lighter the burden of life for him. It will do the same for us. Our knowledge of Christ should be more than historical or theoretical. We should have a personal acquaintance—be in personal communication with him. We should be sensible of our near and dear and close relationship with him. O let us seek for a thorough experimental knowledge of Christ! The sorrows of life will not seem so gloomy, and heaven with its grand significanee will become more desirable to us.

To knowledge we should "add temperance;" which means moderation, and we are commanded to "let our moderation be known unto all men." Our temperance should be as conspicuous "as a city set upon a hill." It is impossible to be a Christian without temperance: for "He that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things." Temperance abstains from evil, and in the practice of the good is not fanatical, but is guided by reason. I have seen people religiously drunk—seen them fanatical and unreasonable in the application of their religious beliefs. Modesty requires that we should dress; but in the application of this fact we are inclined to extremes and become immoderate. The same truth applies to us in all we come in contact with in our life's journey. Now all this is wrong, we should be guided by reason and moderation.

To temperance we are to "add patience;" which signifies a willingness to suffer without fretfulness or murmuring. Paul admonishes that in patience we should possess (control or guide) our souls. Patience is very essential in making life a success.

In the family circle, in general society, in the church, in all life's contacts, patience is much needed. Nearly all of Israel who left Egypt—including their illustrious leader, Moses,—fell in their wilderness journey; because they lacked patience. Impatience has deluged the earth with blood, has fed the martyring flames. It has tortured and slain the innocent and severed the ties of nature, sown the seeds of discord and torn into fragments the sweet ties of even Christian affiliation. Time fails us to enumerate all the evil and misery resulting from impatience. O let us guard against it, ever imploring divine aid.

To patience we are to "add godliness". Christ who "thought it not robbery to be equal with God," is before us as a true pattern of manhood. In him we have visibly developed all that is, true, noble, and divine. In the exemplification of godliness we simply pattern after him. We are to be perfect; which means that we should be just as good as possible. By making Christ our model, we cannot possibly go astray; our position will be that of perfect safety.

To godliness we are to "add brotherly kindness;" which is synonymous to brotherly love—an evidence to the world that we are Christ's disciples. Also, an evidence to us, personally, that we stand accepted with God. This love should be "in deed and in truth", and so intense that we should be willing to "lay down our lives for our brethren."

To brotherly kindness we should "add charity." Charity signifies love to friend and foe, that is one reason why we, as a people, are opposed to the use of the sword on the part of Christians. The laws of carnal warfare forbidus to feed and clothe the man openly arrayed against us. We can hardly conceive how we could intentionally shoot the man we love. Under the former or Mosaic law, God commanded his people to love their neighbor and hate their enemy. Christ abolished that law and the command now is, love all.

In conclusion, the Apostle tells us, that "If these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ." Mark, the Apostle does not say, if you know all about these things intellectually; but, "if they are in you and abound." The idea is: if they are exemplified in life and character, if they set you before the world as a "city set upon a hill," if in the unselfish practice of these graces you produce telling effect upon the consciences and lives of men. If through them your light so shines that God will be glorified. Otherwise, "if ye lack these things," if you are dead to them, is the idea, or if they are not conspicuous so the world can see them, then "ye are blind"; your light is dark, can't see yourselves; your darkness is great. To profess to be a Christian and lack these graces brings reproach upon the cause of Christ and is a fruitful source of infidelity. I verily believe if Christian people would pay less attention to that which is merely formal and theoretical and move to the exemplification of these graces of life and character, we would possess more of the origin of Christian simplicity, and the ranks of God's host would more rapidly fill up. Infidelity would be compelled to stand aloof from the insults it now offers to the truths of God, and thousands, who now grope in the darkness of unbelief and spiritual death, would have the light of eternal joy fill their hearts. May God hasten such a change.

LAYING ON HANDS.

BY LEWIS O. HUMMER.

Laying on of hands was practiced only by those who had the power to bestow spiritual gifts and perform miracles.

When this power to perform miracles ceased, the laying on of hands also ceased. The practice of laying on hands belonged exclusively to the apostolic age. It was done to qualify them for any duty that the Church had to perform. After they were ordained to perform any duty, hands were laid on them by those who had the power to bestow these spiritual gifts in their various capacities. It was not an *official rite* that Elders generally could perform. There were few that had this miraculous power to bestow spiritual gifts. The church can select or ordain her officers today as well as in the apostolic age; but no one can confer these spiritual gifts by laying on hands, and for that reason the practice should be abandoned. It is usually thought that the practice of laying on of hands had something to do with ordination, but this is a mistake. They were first ordained and then *qualified* by these various gifts.

In the ordination of Matthias, (Acts 1st), there was no laying on of hands, for no one had then the power to bestow these spiritual gifts. Not till after the day of Pentecost did the practice of laying on hands commence. And it never was intended to be continued beyond the age of miracles. To be sure that these various spiritual manifestations did exist, read 1 Cor. 12th chapter. Then refer to I Tim. 4 : 14, which reads: "Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the presbytery." In 2 Tim. 1 : 7, Paul refers to the same gift as follows: "Wherefore I put thee in remembrance, that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee by the putting on of my hands." Now, I ask the intelligent inquirer after truth, whether he can doubt that the official functions of "Presbyter" had their origin and perpetuity in the Holy Ghost. And so had all the other official functions which was the guide and director of the church. They had not that blessed book we call the New Testament, to lead and direct them in the way they should go. In church council the Holy Ghost presided over them. In Acts 15 : 15, we read: "For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden." Without the Holy Ghost as their presbyter to lead and direct them in their council in doctrinal points, they would have plunged into as many egregious blunders as the church of Rome. Just so soon as the Holy Ghost laid aside her presbytery all official rights to meddle with doctrinal matters were also laid aside. The Word was then completed, and the work of the Holy Ghost ended; miracles and all official functions ended. What a glorious change now takes place. Private judgment now steps in and takes hold of eternal life, and drinks of the pure water of life which the Holy Ghost has given so freely. No need of any officials in the church to teach any other doctrine than that which the Holy Ghost has taught. All *interpretations* of that Word are to be *individual*, and not official or congregational or episcopal or papal. To follow up the argument read Acts 20 : 28 which reads: "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers." Here it is expressly stated that the Holy Ghost made them overseers. Now how can any one oversee when he is destitute of the Holy Ghost as a guide and director? Only so long as these spiritual gifts were necessary and transmissable by the laying on of hands could that relation exist. No such relation exists to-day. Every one reads and understands for himself. No one is dependent upon a Bishop to teach them. Bishops whom the Holy Ghost made overseers were *infallible*. And their infallibility came through the laying on of the hands of those who had the power to bestow these spiritual gifts. One ORDER of God's arrangements was superceded by another, all through his plan of redemption. The highest *order* will only be reached when his *kingdom comes*. For that reason we pray for "his kingdom to come." The *order* in the church is higher and better than when the Elders were the overseers. Higher and better because every one can read and understand for themselves, and teach and baptize where-ever they go. It is the *modus operandi* in the *government* of the church of Rome that has corrupted her morals. Therefore the higher you run official dignity the further you run away from God. Everything in the economy of grace and salvation depends upon the *government* of the church. What moral rectitude would the observance of all the ordinances (as they came from the hands of the Master) make in the church of Rome so long as her *government* was anti-christian? None whatever. God's *order* in the church is essential to salvation as the atonement itself. Elders cannot perform the functions now that they could in the first age of the church, which changes their relation. The church of Rome run the scale upward instead of downward, and the fruits thereof we see. The moment the church infringes upon the private judgment she assumes a spirit of anti-Christ. It is not only a glorious privilege for each one to read and understand the Scriptures for himself, but a compulsory duty. And for any man or set of me to undertake to abridge this duty or interfere in any way is to set aside the order of God and set up an order of their way.

The first account of laying on hands, I believe is recorded in Acts 4th chapter. Here certain disciples were chosen to look after the poor, and although such outward qualifications were required as their mission demanded, yet the apostles laid their hands on them for the purpose of imparting such gifts as to secure the church against possible fraud or imposition. The whole machinery must be kept pure by means of the Holy Ghost?

In Acts 13th chapter we have another instance of laying on hands. Here it is difficult to know for what purpose hands were laid on them. Perhaps for the gift of tongues, as they were ordained to perform missionary work, and perhaps the gift of tongues was essential to their success. It is enough to know that it was for some qualification that they did not possess. Need I follow the subject any farther. Have I not written enough to convince all my readers that the laying on of hands was performed by but few, and it was done to bestow some miraculous gift and nto to ordain church officers. And inasmuch as no one has the power to bestow those spiritual gifts, it has become an empty form by those who practice it. God did not intend to leave the ministy to a successive bishopric, guided and directed by the Holy Ghost, or else the New Testament would never have been written. If people are to be taught by a succession of ministers only, what advantage is the New Testament?

A Sunday's Dinner.

A Sunday's dinner is made the most sumptuous meal of the week in a great many household, and the guests retire from the table more like gorged anacondas than intellectual human beings, with the result that during the whole afternoon there is such an amount of mental, physical, and religious sleepiness, if not actual stupidity, that no duties whatever are performed with alacrity, efficiency, and acceptableness. The Sunday dinner made of a cup of hot tea, some bread and butter, with a slice of cold meat, and absolutely nothing else, would be wiser and better for all; it would give the servant more leisure, the appetite would be as completely satisfied half an hour afterwards, while body, brain, and heart, would be in a fitting condition to perfotm the duties of the Sabbath with pleasure to ourselves, with greater efficiency to others, and doubtless with larger acceptance to Him toward whom all our service is due.

God's love was so great that it could not wait until we should come into actual existence; the very thought was the delight of his heart.